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ABSTRACT

Following a brief introduction, section II of this publication reviews the following reports on education: (1) The College Board's "Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do"; (2) "Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools," by the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth; (3) John Goodlad's "A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future"; (4) the Carnegie Foundation's 'High School: A Report on American Secondary Education"; (5) "Making the Grade," by the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy; and (6) "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform," by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. After section III's summary of the similarities and differences among these six reports and its discussion of education's response to the reports' criticism, section IV examines the reports' implications in six areas: (1) educational goals, (2) teacher effectiveness, (3) the pros and cons of standards, (4) balance in the curriculum, (5) actions to consider, and (6) the improvement of teaching. (JBM)

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Research Summary Report

THE CALL FOR SCHOOL REFORM

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DECEMBER 1983

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PREFACE

During 1983, the Northwest Regional Exchange sponsored the development of six focused research reports whose topics were identified by the states within the region--Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and the Pacific area. The titles of these publications include:

- Designing Excellence in Secondary Vocational Education: Applications of Principles from Effective Schooling and Successful Business Practices
- Toward Excellence: Student Teacher Behaviors as Predictors of School Success
- State Level Governance: Agenda for New Business or Old?
- A Call for School Reform
- Global Education: State of the Art
- Equitable Schooling Opportunity in a Multicultural Milieu

We have found this dissemination strategy an effective and efficient means of moving knowledge to the user level. Each report is in response to state defined information needs and is intended to influence the improvement of school practice. In each case, a specific knowledge(s) base, anchored in research and development, is analyzed and synthesized. The process is more telescopic than broadly comprehensive in nature. Elements of careful selectivity and professional judgment come into play as authors examine the information against the backdrops of current state needs, directions, and/or interests. As a result, research-based implications and recommendations for action emerge that are targeted and relevant to the region.

J. T. Pascarelli

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THE CALL FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Louis Rubin

INTRODUCTION

Education is currently receiving more attention than it has in several decades. Citizens and politicians alike have combined forces in an effort to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the public school system in the United States. Various state legislatures and governors are considering the implementation of massive reforms of education, while presidential hopefuls are embroidering their speeches with a variety of ideas that would improve the current state of education. What has contributed to this nationwide attention?

Much of the furor has been caused by a number of reports and studies released this year which have dealt with the state of the art of American education. These reports have become some of the most widely publicized studies of education in recent history and, consequently, have made education a vital issue of public concern. The series of reports and studies have touched upon several basic concerns: First, education and the public schools matter to Americans. Second, educational improvement is a pre-eminent national need. Third, in light of eroding standards and a lack of excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership, Americans are currently facing new challenges in improving the educational system.

These recent reports commenting on the state of education in America emphasize that the system is in need of immediate reform, and that all

citizenry needs to work harder for change. The window of opportunity has opened. This is a ripe time for creating change, harvesting resources, and re-evaluating our values. This is a time for directing present attention to solving tomorrow's problems, and for upgrading societal as well as educational standards. The task of touching this country's consciousness regarding the future well-being of our society is at hand.

In May of this year, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its report, A Nation At Risk. In light of this study, similar reports have surfaced, each reflecting upon the level of educational excellence in America, each stressing the need for immediate re-evaluation of the current status quo, and each proposing a multitude of remedies. In this publication, an effort will be made to summarize and to discuss on a selected basis, the major similarities and differences of the reports and to offer six areas of implications for the future.

THE REPORTS

Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do--Educational EQuality Project--The College Board

The Educational EQuality Project of the College Board grew out of concern about the drop in academic standards, noted as one of the causes of the decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, and about evidence that something was amiss in secondary schools: remedial courses were increasing, college admission standards were dropping, elective offerings were growing in number, and a general drifting away from concentration on

basic academic subjects was on the rise. These concerns prompted the College Board to confront the problems posed and to pursue the goals of both excellence and equality through the Education EQuality Project. After several years of fact-finding missions and numerous conferences with many different people, the activities of the board culminated in May of 1983 with the publication of Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need To Know and Be Able To Do. Through questionnaires and meetings, the board had drafted preliminary statements about the academic subjects students need for college preparation, as well as material concerning the basic competencies that students should have for success in college. In writing the "Green Book," the board concluded that both academic subjects and competencies are essential for adequate college preparation, and that the two are indeed interrelated. "Acquisition of the competencies and achievement in the subjects are interdependent; the subjects cannot be mastered without the competencies, and the competencies cannot be developed in a vacuum."

Consequently, the document is not only an agenda for the project, but also an agenda for high schools to pursue. Its objective seeks to strengthen secondary education in the United States and, at the same time, ensure equality of opportunity in higher education, for the project is determined that "we can have both excellence and equality of opportunity." The project's aim is not to impose a national curriculum on all schools or to prescribe uniform standards for graduation, but, rather, to define one of the central purposes of schooling--academic preparation for college--and to be explicit about the "preferred pattern of preparation"--to state, as precisely and as clearly as possible, what it takes to do competent and worthwhile college work.

The document begins by asserting that "adequate preparation for college involves a coherent, cumulative pattern of learning," and adds that "learning the basic academic subjects further develops those competencies." Listing the various competencies provides an avenue through which students and teachers are told what is expected of them. Overall, the report offers a broadly-based, comprehensive description of learning outcomes that exceeds the traditional discipline-based approach used in most secondary schools. It also emphasizes doing well, not just doing time. The ultimate focus is on results, on the kind of learning that is expected. Although it does not identify the number of courses students should take, nor the number of curriculum hours necessary for graduation, the "Green Book" does stress that college-bound students need to know and be able to do certain things. A student, for example, should be able to "relate ideas," use a computer for self-instruction, and formulate problems in mathematical language. In addition, it offers a rationale for studying each of the basic academic subjects by answering the questions of What? and Why?, and although the basic subjects are familiar ones, they are "dressed in new clothes . . . because it (the difference) establishes new expectations for those who set policies and plan curriculum, for those who teach and counsel students, for parents, and for students themselves."

Some critics say that the "Green Book" is "too unrealistic, far-fetched, and hopelessly idealistic." That may be, the project agrees, but the goals described are not too good to be true. "It is intended to be a challenge, and so the course of study it proposes is rigorous. Its purpose is to encourage students and teachers to reach, to

stretch themselves, and to grow." The College Board is also confident that better preparation for the college-bound will spill over and improve the schooling of those who are not college-bound. Thus, better college preparation will also strengthen the education of those who will go directly from high school to the workplace or the military. The project reasserts its aim to continue seeking alliances between educators and employers in order to facilitate gainful employment without the advantages of college. In addition, the staff of the Educational EQuality Project reaffirms its intent to provide information about curriculum development or program design, to furnish guidelines regarding programs that can help meet specific needs, to help organize conferences and workshops, and to support institutions that seek help in bringing about changes consistent with the purposes of the project.

Furthermore, the board believes that by combining the goals of quality and equality, the number of high school dropouts will be lowered and new hope will be given to those students who, because of lack of opportunity, have had their hopes and ambitions thwarted. The board also would like to believe that these efforts will help restore public confidence in education and direct more of the gross national profit into education. Striving for the goals of the project should help reassert U.S. leadership in science and technology, while still ensuring the emphasis on the humanities that will be essential in dealing with questions posed by science and technology.

Action for Excellence--A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools--Task Force on Education for Economic Growth

The report of the National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth stemmed from concerns regarding the technological changes that presently seem to threaten America and the future success of this country. Historically, "Americans have been in love with change--with newness . . . belief in change and progress has been a marked trait of Americans. . . . Today, however, our faith in change and our faith in ourselves as the world's supreme innovators is being shaken . . . our future success as a nation--our national prosperity--will depend on our ability to improve education and training for millions of individual citizens." With this preface, the task force warns that "a real emergency is upon us. . . . We must act now, individually and together . . . and if we do, action soon enough and in the right directions can succeed." American education, therefore, is at the center of the response to change.

First and foremost, the task force report emphasizes that today's definition of basic skills is inadequate for leadership in tomorrow's world. It is inadequate because of technological change and because of increases in the demand for knowledge within the workplace. Although basic literacy implies literal comprehension of a simple written passage, computation with whole numbers, and mastery of the mechanics of writing, these are only the minimal skills necessary for a person's economic survival. Basic literacy concepts are quickly reaching obsolescence, for there exists an urgent need to upgrade considerably our definition of basic skills. This need, created by the surging demand for higher technology in today's and tomorrow's workplace, is one that is sure to be in constant need of redefinition.

This report recommends that in the area of reading, competency is to include not only literal comprehension but also the ability to analyze, summarize, and interpret inferentially. Mathematical competency needs to extend beyond computational ability to include problem-solving skills as well as mathematical applications to solving everyday problems. Competency in writing needs to cover not only the ability to write, but also the ability to gather and organize information effectively. The task force strongly urges the mobilization of America's educational system in order to develop effective programs to teach these new skills.

Because of the overall performance in higher-order skills has declined since the 1970s, the task force strongly advises making the Kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum more intense and more productive. Courses should be enlivened and improved, goals should have greater motivational power, students should be more enthusiastically involved, and the mastery of skills beyond the basics should be encouraged. States and communities are urged to identify the skills that the schools are expected to impart to students for effective employment and citizenship. In addition, the task force also suggests gathering and using various resources to improve with the humanities, and establishing partnerships with business, labor, and other professions in order to improve the overall quality of education. In other areas, the report recommends increased participation of highly talented minorities and women in educational courses, adequate programs for the handicapped, identification and institution of programs for the academically-gifted students, and overall fair distribution of local funds, supplemented by federal funding.

"Can we educate future generations sufficiently well to assure steadily increasing productivity and economic growth?" The task force firmly believes that this is possible, but that we, as a whole, are not doing so now. "We are not doing so because we face some serious deficiencies in our educational system and because we have reached no clear consensus about what must be done to improve education." Therefore, in order to implement curriculum renewal, the task force anticipates that some consensus about education will indeed be reached. With regard to students, the task force finds that the need to intensify the academic experience is crucial to improving education. Policies dealing with discipline, attendance, homework, and grades should be strengthened, and both the time and the standards of academic learning should be increased. Student progress needs to be tested periodically to determine general achievement and mastery of specific skills, and, most importantly, student promotion should be based upon mastery not upon age. Entrance requirements to colleges and universities also should be raised Overall, the report's chief goal is greater intensity and increased productivity throughout the educational system.

With respect to teachers and their status in American education, the report clearly suggests that an expression of a new and higher regard for teachers is essential in implementing change. Methods for recruiting, training, and paying teachers should be improved, career ladders should be created, incentives for both entering and staying with the profession should be offered, and rewards to honor good teachers should be established.

In summary, the current educational deficits in the fields related to technological progress, and mathematics and science, are especially disturbing. Although the United States can still claim some degree of technological supremacy, this claim is in danger of becoming extinct as other nations have expanded their capacities and have surpassed American productivity. Can we improve public education across the country? The task force is convinced that this is quite possible, in light of the abundant resources in this country and the fact that many states and communities have already taken steps toward the improvement of educational standards. "But," the report concludes, "the stakes are high and our ultimate success will depend in large measure on our willingness to act."

A Place Called School: Prospect for the Future--John I. Goodlad

This particular report summarizes the findings of an eight-year study of schooling. It calls for establishing smaller schools, including some "key" schools, where new ideas could be tried out. Other recommendations include enrolling children at four years of age and graduating them at sixteen, ending the existing tracking system, creating a select group of "head teachers," requiring a core curriculum of general courses in high school, and establishing independent curriculum centers.

High School: A Report on American Secondary Education--Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Carnegie report suggests a single track for all students, as well as the development of a new Scholastic Aptitude Test, linked to the core

curriculum of high schools. The report stresses the importance of establishing a core of common learning in order to facilitate instruction and to strengthen the connections among high schools, colleges, and various workplaces.

In improving the curriculum, the Carnegie report emphasizes the importance of obtaining "proficiency in language" and competency evidenced by "clear writing skills." The report also urges schools to maintain a degree of flexibility regarding instruction since differences do exist among students, and encourages the use of literature as a tool to demonstrate "the power and beauty of the written word."

The study aims to improve the quality of secondary education, as well as to rebuild confidence in public education. In addition, the report also accentuates the importance of identifying and rewarding excellence in teaching, and recommends the establishment of funds and rewards to serve as incentives for potential and existing teachers.

Making the Grade--Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy

This report joins the growing chorus of concerned critics in maintaining that U.S. schools are in dire straits. The emerging consensus suggests that American schools are not living up to expectations. Historically, Americans have consistently reaffirmed their faith in schools by increasing the number of functions and services that schools are expected to perform; however, it does seem that Americans require even more. "We expect the schools to be all things to all people. We expect them to serve not only as agents of education, but as

vehicles of social, political, and even legal change as well." No other institution has ever been expected to do so much; consequently, it should come as no surprise that schools have failed to meet public expectations.

The Twentieth Century Fund Report believes that both elementary and secondary schools, forced to play many roles, are in danger of forgetting their fundamental purpose: providing "the basic skills of reading, writing, and calculating, training in science and foreign language, technical capability in computers, and knowledge of civics." The task force contends that the nation needs a common curriculum that includes mastery of basic skills taught and developed through the primary and elementary curriculum, as well as success in the complex skills taught in high school. "Schools must provide students with the competencies to exist in, to sustain, and to further develop a complex economic and technological society. Schools must nurture in individuals those qualities of mind and character that are necessary to maintain an ethnically diverse democracy. Schools must imbue students with the desire to acquire knowledge, so that both they and their society may grow and prosper . . . all schools need to do them (these tasks) well."

In view of this philosophy, the task force concludes that educational improvement is a pre-eminent national need. In meeting that need, individual Americans and the society as a whole would benefit. Because this need exists, the task force also finds that the federal government must contribute to such improvement without interfering with state or local responsibility and accountability for the public schools. In citing the need for federal assistance, the task force is not seeking to undermine the historical tradition of the separation between local and

state governments and the federal government. It does, however, seek to emphasize the fact that Americans have always viewed education as a significant national need that required federal support, and that while in the past, administrative and fiscal responsibilities were effectively handled at the state and local levels, the urgency of our current need has far surpassed the efficacy and plausible financial support of local governments. Since American society has become more complicated, higher levels of educational achievement has become essential for all citizens. Consequently, the U.S. today requires both higher levels of literacy skills for participation of these higher-order skills. Because of this development, the current perception of education in America is that the performance of students, especially those in the secondary schools, does not meet this new and higher standard. In addition, "the problem is national and acute in intensity." Therefore, the task force believes that the federal government should supplement local and state efforts in some specific areas of education. The efforts of the federal government can be grouped under three broad headings: (1) quality, (2) equality, and (3) quality control.

Regarding the quality of educational leadership, the Twentieth Century Fund suggests that the executive and legislative branches of the federal government should be the agents emphasizing the need for better schools and better education. With respect to teachers, the report stresses that the status of teaching needs to be reinforced, incentives should be provided for both potential and existing teachers, and furthermore, good teachers should be rewarded and encouraged to remain in the classroom. Twentieth Century Fund recommends that the federal

government recognise and reward teaching excellence in the form of monetary grants which would permit teachers to devote a year to professional development, and sharing acquired skills with other staff members.

In the area of curriculum, the report proposes a comprehensive approach to the study of languages and stresses the need for the development of literacy in English as being the most important objective in elementary and secondary schooling in the United States. The report further suggests the use of currently existing bilingual education funds to teach non-English speaking students to speak, read, and write English. In addition, the task force recommends that students be given the opportunity to acquire a second language and also advises the federal government to sponsor a grant program which would serve as an incentive for foreign language teachers. Regarding mathematics and science education, the task force advocates scientific literacy among all citizens and suggests that advanced training in these subjects be provided at the secondary school level.

As far as equality of education is concerned, Twentieth Century Fund proposes that programs for the poor and the handicapped be supported through funds from the federal treasury. Federal aid should be distributed to districts that are overburdened by high percentages of immigrants, illegal aliens, and other improverished groups, as well as to districts that are located within depressed economic areas.

Above and beyond these recommendations, Twentieth Century Fund urges the continued collection of information about the educational system in America and about the academic performance of students across the United

States. Further emphases in the report deal with the need for additional research regarding the learning process and the need for constant evaluation of federally-sponsored educational programs.

The issues of quality control are not addressed in detail. Although revisions of certain standards are emphasized, the report fails to set college entrance requirements, standards for student performance, progress, absences, discipline, homework policies, or study skills. Although the Twentieth Century Fund recognises that character of the American people is fostered by the institution of school, few guidelines as to the necessary methodology to employ in achieving such characteristics are offered. Rather, the report stresses the role of the federal government in its efforts related to education; it suggests that since the intellect and the character of all Americans need support, the federal government must take responsibility for helping meet this national need.

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform--The National Commission on Excellence in Education

The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education is structured around three basic messages. First and most importantly, "the nation is at risk." This nation is at risk because competitors throughout the world have begun to overtake America's once unchallenged lead in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovations. Undoubtedly, there exist other contributing factors, but education is a primary factor undergirding the "prosperity, security, and civility" of this country. Second, "mediocrity, not excellence, is the norm in

American education." This "rising tide of mediocrity" is endangering the fundamental educational foundations of American society. The low rankings of U.S. students on international assessments of student achievement, the increasing illiteracy rate, the decline in average Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, the decline in superior Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, and the increase in remedial instruction all serve to illustrate this point. Third, "we don't have to put up with this situation . . . we <u>can</u> do better, and we <u>must</u> do better." In the past, Americans have responded quickly to challenges by establishing land-grant colleges and universities, by educating a huge workforce in light of the demands of the Industrial Revolution, and by transforming vast numbers of immigrants into productive citizens. "The Commission deeply believes that the problems we have discerned in American education can be both understood and corrected if the people of our country, together with those who have public responsibility in the matter, care enough and are courageous enough to do what is required."

In view of these vital messages, the recommendations of the Commission are more than prescriptive; they provide a framework within which both parents and educators can evaluate their individual situations and determine how best to improve them. The Commission report focuses on the content of learning, the amount of time devoted to learning, and the expectations we hold for ourselves, students, teaching, and leadership.

Regarding the content of learning, the Commission recommends that high school graduation requirements consist of five new basics: four years of English, three years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, and one-half year of computer science. In

addition, for the college-bound students, two years of a foreign language are recommended. In other areas of the curriculum, the Commission suggests more time for learning through better classroom management and organization of the school day; additional instruction for the slow learners, the gifted, and the handicapped; improvement of textbooks and instructional materials; an early introduction to study skills; an increase in the amount of homework; an increase in the number of school hours; and an increase in the number of school days.

In reviewing American standards and expectations, A Nation at Risk comments that "we expect far too little of our students and we get . . . exactly what we expect." Because of this attitude, the report advises that high schools, colleges, and universities need to raise admission standards and expectations, both academic and behavioral. Since there also exists a need to improve the reliability of student achievement grades, the Commission recommends the establishment of a nationwide program of achievement testing for students passing from one level of schooling to another or to the workplace. There also exists a need for stronger attendance policies and for the reduction of disruption in the classrooms of America. Consequently, firmer, stronger, and more rigorous policies need to be instituted.

As far as teaching is concerned, the Commission stresses the need to improve educational standards, teacher salaries, rewards, and incentives. It proposes an eleven-month contract for teachers, the establishment of career ladders by school boards in order to distinguish among teachers, the use of resource persons in the community who could offset the problems created by the lack of teachers in certain crucial

areas such as mathematics, science, and English, and the involvement of teachers in designing teacher preparation programs and supervising teachers.

Addressing leadership and fiscal support, A Nation At Risk suggests that American citizens should hold educators and elected officials responsible for the programs designed to improve educational standards. School boards should develop leadership skills, and parents, educators, and public officials should be involved together toward actualizing the common goals toward improvement. Citizens are also expected to provide fiscal support, while the federal government is also expected to meet these crucial needs, for "excellence costs . . . but in the long run mediocrity costs far more."

Addressing other issues, the Commission stresses the fact that there is an undeniable need for a learning society in America. The report reaffirms that education is the key element that binds and strengthens our society. Because of new developments in computers, robotics, and other technologies, the report asks for the development of a learning society in which all members are educationally literate and competent regarding current issues and developments. In addition, the Commission also states that efforts toward improving education should be considered as being a common goal of a pluralistic society such as ours: "Americans like to think of this nation as the pre-eminent country for generating the great ideas and material benefits of all mankind." Thus, "Education should be at the top of the nation's agenda."

A Nation at Risk concludes with several messages. With respect to excellence, the Commission states that "for the individual, excellence

encompasses the stretching and testing of individual ability to the fullest, both in school and in the workplace. Each of us can attain individual excellence. Our goal must be to develop the talents of all to the fullest." With respect to public commitment, the Commission reaffirms the fact that "the public's support . . . is the most powerful tool at hand for improving education." Therefore, in combining the two philosophies, the report offers a message to parents: "There exists the need for parents to send children off into the world with the best possible education, coupled with respect for first-rate work. Parents need to demand the best that our schools and colleges can provide." For the students who, after all, are at the crux of these reports, the Commission's message is clear: "You forfeit your chance for life at its fullest when you withhold your best effort in learning. When you give only the minimum to learning, you receive only the minimum in return. . . . In the end it is <u>your</u> work that determines how much and how well you learn."

DISCUSSION

<u>Summary of Reports</u>

In all the reports there exists the common ground of concern regarding student achievement, weakening societal adaptability, and foreign advancement in the fields of science, technology, and mathematics. Furthermore, a common bond exists regarding the values and expectations of our American society. It does appear that we, as a nation, do <u>not</u> expect the best, nor do we value it, nor do we cherish it,

nor do we structure our living standards according to the "best." These are the areas of greatest concern, and until the time that adequate consideration is given to these issues, we will still be a nation that accepts the "average," not a nation that expects the "best."

All of the reports urge that higher standards be set, that best effort be demanded of students, that "basic skills" be redefined to include: higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, summarizing, application, synthesizing, evaluating, and interpreting; problem solving; foreign language; and computer science. They urge that public schools refocus their efforts on the fundamental purpose for their existence. That is, emphasizing academic achievement rather than trying to be an institute for social reform.

All reports point to the classroom teacher as the integral component in the effort for school reform. Various suggestions for improvement in training and performance of teachers are suggested by the reports. Incentives, training and rewards are addressed by each report with somewhat different emphasis.

The get-tough, hard-nosed, tone of the reports may be inspired, in part, by a desire to rebuild the nation's competitive muscle in the international market-place. There is, of course, nothing wrong with such an intent but it would be absurd to assume that the schools are responsible for the problems afflicting big business. Curriculum reform will not alter economic reality. Thus, on the one hand, it would be unseemly and irrational for the education establishment to plead mea culpa--and, hat-in-hand, initiate all of the suggested reforms. But on the other hand, the schools are not in the best of health: weaknesses

exist, and remedies must be found. This obligation cannot be avoided even if the times themselves are not entirely favorable: inadequate money, scant home support, and the hardships imposed by high unemployment, broken families, and the daily arrival of new immigrants compound and complicate the schools' task.

We must, nonetheless, do what is necessary to get our house in order. The remarkable accomplishments of some districts in reversing the tides of mediocrity--particularly those in harsh inner-city environments, faced with many obstacles--make it plain that every school can be a good school. The success formula is less a matter of magic than of common sense: The indispensable requirements are (a) concerned parents, (b) school administrators who are both demanding and supportive, and (c) a cadre of committed, able teachers--who are driven by their sense of mission. Passionate, inspired teaching can compensate for a vast number of other liabilities. Thus, restoring teachers' self-esteem and spirit may well be the greatest hurdle we face.

Education's Response

The reports do not note that major improvements in education already are underway. This is not surprising since, presumably, the purpose of the reports was to counter public apathy. In point of fact, by next year, nine out of ten school districts will have substantially increased their expectations of students. There have, moreover, been a number of spectacular successes in transforming a school's quality. Tennessee, for example, is benefiting from its Honors Diplomas, wherein students are given special distinction for taking a more difficult course of study.

Boston's South High School and Chicago's Lincoln Park typify schools which--in a relatively short time--have changed from mediocre to outstanding. The seriousness with which the states are attempting to upgrade their educational programs is reflected in Iowa's bounty provisions: students are given a $25 award for taking physics and other difficult subjects.

Developments in California, Florida, and South Carolina also make it clear that the public is willing to spend more for good schooling. An impressive amount of additional money has been funneled into educational improvement efforts. The growing involvement of business and industry--through loaning equipment and professional personnel--serves as yet another illustration. Scores of firms have taken on a particular school and provided various kinds of assistance. Even the White House, under the prodding of the President, has "adopted" an elementary school in the District of Columbia.

These gains do not mean that all is well: they merely suggest that--in places--progress has occurred. The national picture, in fact, is one of contradiction: the good schools are very, very good--and the bad ones are terrible. A recent report in the American School Board Journal indicates that the teachers themselves are alarmed: according to the report, two out of three teachers favor merit pay.

In a kind of culminating ceremony, the Forum of Educational Organization Leaders met in Washington, during October, 1983 and endorsed a number of recommendations set forth in the various reports. These included higher teacher salaries; grouping teachers into three professional levels--beginning, experienced, and master; giving the

master teachers twelve-month contracts and involving them in the training of new personnel; requiring an hour a day of homework for elementary school pupils and two hours a day for high school students; compulsory competency tests for all new teachers; four years of English, two each of science, math and social studies, and computer literacy as requirements for graduation; using "forgivable" loans as a means of attracting high quality college graduates into teaching, and shoring-up discipline standards. The action, signaling a united front, was somewhat unique in that representatives from the NEA, AFT, School Boards Association, Elementary and Secondary Principals Associations, State Departments of Education, PTA, and teacher training institutions jointly agreed on the recommendations. Educators, in sum, took their stand.

IMPLICATIONS

What, then, are the implications of all this? From the standpoint of educators, how much of the criticism is legitimate, and how much is merely political maneuvering? What aspects of the problems can be cured by schools, and what corrections are the responsibility of social policy makers? Finally, how much of the situation is the natural consequence of ongoing social trends? Six implications follow.

Educational Goals

A number of factors cannot be denied. Standards have indeed lowered, and a large proportion of students now take non-academic subjects. The traditional mechanics of schooling--memorization, drill, practice, and

systematic homework--are no longer commonplace. Efforts in the home to reinforce the acquisition of skills and knowledge seem to have slackened considerably. Finally, teaching no longer attracts talented individuals, and the intellectual capability and general knowledge of beginning teachers is far from what was once the case. It is not surprising, consequently, that scores on academic achievement tests have eroded, and that when international comparisons are made with youth from other nations, American students fare badly.

When the contributing causes are analyzed, however, it becomes apparent that much of the situation is inevitable. Our educational ethos is rooted in egalitarianism, for we are dedicated to the belief that no child should be handicapped educationally because of "accidents of birth." We have steadfastly sought to avoid distinguishing between what is taught to different socioeconomic groups. Indeed, our abiding conviction is that good education ought, properly, to compensate for handicaps wherever it can. This, obviously, is not the case in other countries such as Japan, England and France, where such discriminations are regarded as essential.

Moreover, our schools place heavy emphasis on individual needs, on instruction that has direct social relevance, on rectifying societal problems, and on compensating for personal disabilities. Hence, we believe that elective courses may, in the last analysis, be as useful as required ones, that alternative curricula are indispensable, and that there should not be major differences between the subjects studied by college-bound and noncollege-bound students.

In addition, we are dedicated to decentralization and local control. In our scheme of things, an appropriate curriculum is not decided by individuals in Washington, but rather by the citizens of Pasadena, Newark, and Peoria. Resultingly, we frown upon compulsory external examinations, particularly those which control access to higher education and desirable vocations. In contrast, Japan, England and France do have such examinations, and the bulk of public education is directed toward their requirements. Compulsory examinations, in short, compel a focus upon specific subject-matter and the virtual exclusion of everything else. The commitment to local preference, coupled with the absence of a national curriculum and national examinations, produces considerable diversity in the educational system. This, again, is not the case in most other nations. Thus, Japanese students are superior to American on tests in science and mathematics, but they may not test nearly as high in the areas of self-direction, creativeness, and spontaneity.

Thus, while the wave of anti-intellectualism must be combatted, standards bolstered, and the values of education reasserted, we cannot hope to match the test scores achieved in other nations without--at the same time--also accepting a number of liabilities: intense competition, a single-minded fixation on passing examinations, rote learning, and the doctrine of educational elitism.

The last, of course, is particularly antithetical to the American dream. Not only do we reject the concept of a superior class--reached through public education--but we also view education as a means of personal improvement. Copying the Japanese system, consequently, involves far more than a longer school year, compulsory examinations, and

a rigid curriculum; it also involves an educational ideology that is incongruent with our heritage.

There are, in short, trade-offs: the strengths of one system generate weaknesses, just as the shortcomings of the other permit different strong points. The social settings, moreover, also vary: teachers in other nations frequently enjoy higher status, and better salaries, than their American counterparts.

The question, then is whether we can stay with our commitment to local control, curricula reflecting differing priorities, alternative expectations, and nonstandardized examinations, and still improve educational achievement. Education serves a number of functions in our society. It takes kids off the streets and fosters socialization. It provides a broad range of learning and experiences. It frees parents from the chores of child care during the day, and it facilitates transition to higher education and adult vocations. Education, therefore, can pursue a number of aims: on the one hand, a mastery of geometry and scientific literacy and, on the other, a healthy self-concept, self-discipline, and the ability to deal intelligently with emotional crises. Schools, however, cannot do everything and thus choices must be made.

Teacher Effectiveness

A second important implication of the reports is that the quality of teaching in the nation's schools demands immediate attention. Perhaps the most controversial proposals involve merit pay. It would be hard to quarrel with the assumption that monetary incentives represent an

efficient way of motivating teachers toward high achievement, as well as a means of attracting capable people into the teaching professional. It is important, in this regard to separate the two conceptions of merit pay currently being debated. In one approach, teachers who perform better and achieve more simply are paid more money than other teachers. In the other approach, however, meritorious teachers are given the opportunity to take on extra assignments: supervising beginning teachers, functioning as department administrators, working on curriculum projects and so on. They then receive extra pay for extra service.

In either approach, it would seem essential for teachers to participate both in the evaluation of their peers and in the selection of master teachers. If they do not play a substantial role in the evaluation, suspicions will be raised, anxieties will be unleashed, and morale will diminish considerably. On the surface, it would seem logical to reward teachers who expend greater effort and make more of contribution. Assuming that some agreement is reached as to the definition of "good teaching," moreover, it is also likely that evaluators will be able to discriminate between the best and the worst of teachers.

A number of dangers, nonetheless, are present. A workable merit pay procedure will depend upon a thorough program of teacher evaluation. Such a program, to be defensible, will necessitate the expenditure of considerable amounts of energy, time, and money. In addition, a merit pay program would establish ratings which identify ordinary, good, and exceptional teachers. If these ratings were to become a matter of public record, it is conceivable that parents would resist having their children

placed in the classrooms of second- or third-level instructors. If, for example, a school has two third-grade classrooms--one taught by an average teacher, and the other by a "merit" teacher--who determines which students go where? Furthermore, while merit pay might serve as a stimulus to the more able teachers, it would not have much effect on the less able. Competition has an effect only when the competitor thinks he or she has a chance to win. Finally, salary incentives are one thing during times of affluence and another in periods of austerity. At present, the purseholders seem unwilling to earmark more dollars for education. Dollars are in short supply. Since the money for merit pay will come from the general salary budget, it will--in effect--work a hardship on average teachers.

These factors notwithstanding, it is likely that merit pay will get its day in court. Sufficient political support has been mustered to ensure its test in a number of districts. This being the case, perhaps the most important admonition is that teachers participate fully in setting the criteria of good teaching and judging the effectiveness of their colleagues.

Similar paradoxes exist with respect to teacher examinations. On the one hand, there appears to be little correlation between scores teachers earn on competency tests and their effectiveness in the classroom. Presumably, test-taking involves skills which differ from those used in teaching. On the other hand, however, it makes abundant sense to verify teacher adequacy, to make certain that classroom practitioners have sufficient knowledge and skills to perform the tasks at hand. In addition, many observers believe that insufficient general education is the major weakness associated with ineffectual teachers.

Still, used in the wrong way, teacher examinations could take a heavy toll on morale. In addition, such examinations--by placing a seal of approval on specified methods--could conceivably deprive innovative and creative teachers of the right to do things in their own way. Since there is no one best way to teach, standardization in teaching can be as much an evil as a blessing. Teacher unions will undoubtedly monitor the development of competency examinations closely, just as outside observers are likely to argue continuously that the wrong competencies are being emphasized. All in all, however, logic would suggest that examinations controlling access to practice would serve the teaching profession in much the same way as do examinations in law and medicine.

The Pros and Cons of Standards

A third implication involves the question of standards. Respectable standards are essential. Similarly, defending low standards on the grounds that they permit the accomplishment of other goals would be short-sighted. The ideal, obviously, is to maintain decent standards and at the same time provide support for students having difficulty. Whether this can be done, however, is open to debate. Beyond this problem lies a further concern: there are rational and irrational ways of sustaining standards, and tactical errors come easy.

For example, specifying compulsory teacher behavior, both in the area of instructional methodology and curriculum adaptation, in order to control quality could have a number of deleterious effects. While it may be sensible to prescribe expected outcomes from teaching, dictating the means by which these ends should be achieved is a good deal more

questionable. Compelling teachers to use specified methods, restricting their freedom to adjust the instruction to the nature of the students, and allowing no latitude for individual autonomy in improving the quality of learning will all damage morale, inhibit creativity, and reduce teaching to pawn-like procedures. No teaching method carries a built-in guarantee.

A parallel blunder occurs when we assume that by specifying four years of English we will automatically increase grammar and writing skills. Time spent in a seat does not necessarily equate with higher achievement. Precisely the same naivete underlies many of the other recommendations for reform: three years of math, science and social studies; lengthening the school day to seven hours; assigning more homework; and tightening attendance policies. Such provisions do, obviously, provide a vehicle for improvement; how the vehicle is used, however, makes a considerable difference.

Consider, as another illustration, the extraordinary accomplishments of many Asian American students. Although they represent but 1.5 percent of the population, their academic achievement is of much higher proportion. Among the recent forty Westinghouse finalists, three were born in Asia and an additional three were of Asian descent. The University of California accepts 15 percent of the state high school students; 40 percent of the Asian Americans, however, qualify. Ten percent of Harvard's current freshman class is also Asian American. Of the eighty-three honors students in Boston's Brighton High School, fifty-six are Vietnamese. How is it that such students thrive and flourish on precisely the same teaching and curriculum given to American

youngsters? For many of these students, with exceptional achievement records, English is the second rather than first language.

The answer lies in the attitudes students and their parents have toward schooling. Most Asians regard education as the only path to recognition and success. Not only are they driven by a lasting respect for education, but there is also an enormous pressure to work hard and avoid failure. Not succeeding, in fact, is akin to a major social disgrace. There are, to be sure, grim entries on the negative side of the ledger: stress, emotional turbulence, and suicide are not uncommon among Asian American students. Nonetheless, their successes clearly demonstrate that teaching method and curriculum are not the whole story.

In short, the problem is more complex than one might suspect. We do need higher standards and better teacher training, but we also need to restore educational values, to develop willing learners and supportive parents, and to inspire dedicated and spirited teaching.

It is tempting to argue that elevating standards will produce a number of undesirable consequences. Marginal students, for example, may fall by the wayside, the drop-out rate could increase, and many students who now slip by will fail. If tracking is eliminated, moreover, and schools shift to "one program for all," these problems will multiply even further. However, if we really are committed to a quality education for all, and if the society is willing to underwrite the financial costs of excellence in schooling, one would think that we have an ethical responsibility to establish defensible standards and to enable every child, as best we can, to achieve as much as ability permits. Were this to become the case, our fears that "minimal standards will become the maximum" could be put aside.

Balance in the Curriculum

Whether or not the present curriculum is overweight with electives--and underweight in the area of solid basics--is arguable. Everything depends on how we define the purpose of schools, and on what we regard as sensible education. There is little disagreement as to the importance of fundamental literacy, a familiarity with our cultural underpinnings, an ability to deal with numbers, and a sound set of values. Beyond these things, however, the debate thickens. Many teachers and administrators, for example, seriously question whether every student can master a college preparatory program. Even among students of demonstrated ability, a trend is in motion. Why, we might ask, have so many students abandoned the traditional curricula in favor of more electives?

The major problems seemingly, bear upon appropriateness of subject-matter, the amount of time that should be devoted to various objectives, and the level of difficulty which should be required. The ongoing trend suggests that many students are skeptical about the virtues of the traditional program. A great many students, as an illustration, have left college-entry courses in favor of general tracks: twenty years ago, 12 percent of our high school students were in non-college preparatory programs; today the figure is 42 percent. Far fewer students take advanced science and math courses, enrollment in foreign languages has declined substantially, fourth-year English courses have few takers, and, in general, there appears to be a wave of anti-intellectualism. More than half the freshmen in Chicago's public high schools are in remedial math classes; a mere 8 percent of Illinois' high school

population take calculus; a fourth of the state's high schools do not offer physics; and fewer than half the students take chemistry. Presumably, the record in other states is not much better.

The trend goes beyond subject-matter, however. American students tend to spend fewer hours on homework, less time in school, and less energy on intellectual pursuits than youngsters in other nations. Curiously, however, the public does not seem overly concerned. Judging by recent polls, most parents feel their children are getting a respectable education and have little complaint about the quality of their schools. All in all, we seem to be confronted with a domino-like array of problems: a great many parents seemingly want their children involved in nonacademic courses which focus on personal development, social skills, and topics which have current interest. Catering to these preferences, the schools have increased their range of elective offerings. Now, to accommodate the demands for reform, the schools must either disregard parental desires and restrict the curriculum to the traditional "solids" or extend the period of formal schooling in order to provide both.

Two additional factors further complicate matters: first, retooling the schools to offer a solid academic curriculum will be anything but simple, and second, serious objections to such a shift are likely to be raised by pressure groups outside the school. While the computer manufacturers applaud the new courses in computer literacy, the producers of sporting goods will frown upon a reduction in the physical education program. The producers of typewriters would undoubtedly quarrel with a reduced emphasis upon business education, much as many ethnic groups will

fight against the elimination of multicultural programs. There are factions that will fight fiercely for the retention of health education programs, and factions that will push just as zealously for courses in typing and bookkeeping. Finally, on a more general scale, many people feel the present curriculum slights gifted children in deference to students with special education problems, while others feel that the gifted can take care of themselves and the school's obligation is to help those who are, in one way or another, impeded or underprivileged.

Whatever the eventual outcome of the debate, it appears that legislators in statehouses have already reached a conclusion. Most states have already taken steps to raise admission requirements in colleges and universities, and most have already made efforts to stiffen high school curricula. Since school dollars are in short supply, it will undoubtedly be necessary to shift many teachers from elective courses to those that will be additionally required. Predictably, therefore, the instructional alternatives open to students will be restricted. As the realignments continue, we would do well to remember that educational excellence cannot be achieved by simply requiring more time in classroom seats, assigning larger amounts of homework, and increasing the difficulty of tests. Similarly, restructuring the instructional program does not imply that many of the useful innovations developed during the last decade--particularly those dealing with more effective teaching--should be discarded. What the schools must not do is trash the new system and reinstitute the old, but rather deal with the major weaknesses which exist now. Classrooms, for example, often are dreary beyond belief. In too many instances, instruction is based predominantly

on teacher-talk. Developing general intellectual skills, cultivating a capacity for reasoning, and facilitating student self-direction in learning are important--whether or not their accomplishment is measured on standardized tests.

In lieu of moving into reform simply for the sake of reform, we would do better to answer a number of bedrock questions: Are home economics, art, music, physical education and drama as unimportant as some of the calls for change suggest? What should be anticipated with respect to preparing the young for the time ahead? Today's students, aware of an impending job shortage, worry about the future. Their conceptions of community and family responsibilities frequently differ from those of their parents. They place work and leisure in new frameworks, prize independence and the opportunity for self-expression, and seek a saner world in which to live.

Along somewhat the same lines, we must be clear about what we hope to accomplish through any changes that are instituted. It is one thing to simply add a course labeled "science," and quite another to introduce a course that genuinely teaches students significant scientific concepts, of respectable complexity, in a stimulating manner. Although it would be relatively easy to require all students to take two years of a foreign language, we should recognize that it takes five years to achieve genuine competence in a second language.

Perhaps the most critical question we must ask is: What will it take to ensure that every student acquires the knowledge, skills, and values essential to effective participation in our shifting society? Given a sensible answer to the question, we can then set about devising the

methods and materials, the incentives and motivations, and the program organization necessary to bring about such learning.

Lastly, we must recognize that educational excellence depends upon high-quality instruction. Skillful teaching, it might be added, is far harder to achieve than higher standards. Indeed, even in our present, less-than-ideal state, many gifted teachers still circumvent all the odds and obstacles, inspire their charges with the joys of learning, and achieve impressive results.

Some Actions to Consider?

If nothing else, the reports publicize--and dramatize--educational weaknesses. To ignore these, obviously, would be, first, unconscionable, and second, political folly. The schools must demonstrate both a cooperative spirit and a willingness to overcome problems. Viewed collectively, however, the reports suggest a mind-boggling list of reforms. The cost of the assorted changes--in time, energy, and money--will be monumental. Estimates indicate, for example, that to comply with the suggestions in just one of the reports, Risk, would take about 20 billion dollars annually. Hence, in initiating improvements the schools must begin with what is educationally and monetarily feasible.

In addition, the reports deal with high schools in general: they make no judgment as to the quality of individual districts and particular schools. As a consequence, each faculty and administration must determine which recommendations are applicable to their situation; which are reasonable; and which can be implemented without excessive turbulence. The citizenry itself, moreover, will expect a voice in the

action. Parents in a particular community want, or do not want, student tracking, a range of electives, and easily satisfied graduation requirements. Thus, educators and their clients will need to agree upon desirable modifications, and the order in which they should be pursued.

Although some of the recommendations are sensible and beyond dispute; others, are highly controversial. It would therefore seem politic to begin with changes which have obvious logic and widespread approval--delaying the more questionable shifts until the problems have been studied, alternatives considered, public expectations surveyed, and a rational plan of action devised.

For starters, then, each school might evaluate its overall curriculum with respect to balance, and--where appropriate--increase its emphasis on math and science, because of their growing significance. Similarly, schools might review their levels of student expectation, and make certain that standards of student performance--in both quantity and quality of learning--are sufficiently rigorous. In the same vein, provisions for assessing student development also can be checked. Do the tests accurately measure student competencies in language skills critical reasoning, mathematical proficiency and so on. What arrangements are made for those who fall below expectation? Do the assessment procedures have undesirable side effects: excessive reliance upon rote memorization; discouraging progress beyond minimal expectations; stigmatizing non-achievers; and other negative consequences.

The mounting interest in school-business collaborations also offer possibilities. Nothing, perhaps, is quite as trendy as public education, but there is nothing wrong with taking advantage of a good thing while it

is available. Predictably, the collaborations are likely to be temporal: business and industry, at the moment, are anxious to encourage improvements. If, however, the present is anything like the past, their attention will eventually turn elsewhere, particularly after the reforms are underway. Still, such collaborations--in the shape of donated equipment, assistance with staff development, and part-time, outside-expert, teaching, could have their advantages. Not the least of these, possibly, will be a greater understanding, in the business sector, of the obstacles under which the schools labor.

Other revisions, as well, may have merit. Districts, for example, can experiment with different plans for school improvement and identify successful change models. In the area of discipline, student conduct codes can be strengthened and--with the reports as support--enforced more vigorously. Every effort should be made, certainly, to control crime and vandalism; free teachers from behavioral disruptions; reduce drug consumption; discourage truancy; and--it goes without saying--to eliminate any form of physical or verbal attack upon teachers.

Many of the other recommendations, on the other hand, are somewhat more "iffy." Uncertainties exist regarding their utility and practicality. Opinions differ, for instance, as to the legitimacy of "one curriculum for all." Even if effective procedures for orchestrating the required changes were at hand, there is by no means universal agreement that all students want and need exactly the same instructional sequence.

Merit pay, too, has its pluses and minuses. While the arguments in favor have considerable logic, the negative fall-out--even if implemented

carefully, could produce major drawbacks. Similar difficulties surround the recommendations on competency tests--both for teachers and students. In the case of teachers, although it makes abundant sense to guarantee that entering teachers have sufficient knowledge and skill to carry-out their responsibilities, the tests are of little help in predicting whether those with passing scores will be successful or unsuccessful teachers. Put another way, the capacities measured by the tests are essential--but in and of themselves--an inadequate basis for selecting teachers. In the case of student competency tests, it would be sensible to determine whether students have mastered the designated instructional objectives. At the same time, however, many educational aims are not easily measured by such tests. More, it is important that instruction go beyond the test items, and that learning not terminate after minimum competencies have been attained. As in the case of merit pay, it is not the concept itself that is dangerous, but rather the possibility that it will be misinterpreted or abused.

Somewhat the same observations could be made about a longer school day or year, creating "head teachers," dividing large high schools into smaller units, the Carnegie Foundation's suggestion for "Residential Academies in Science and Mathematics," John Goodlad's recommendations on establishing independent curriculum centers, and the utilization of high technology apparatus. Without question, students should become familiar with computers. It is important to discriminate, however, between the lures of faddism and authentic improvements. The chances are good, for example, that before we can develop serviceable software, and train teachers to make intelligent use of computer technology, the state of the art will change and present equipment will become obsolete.

The Improvement of Teaching

Opportunity may knock more than once, but it is certainly less than plentiful. We would be well-advised, consequently, to take advantage of the temporal impetus spawned by the reports. In doing so, nonetheless, it is important to recognize that educational quality cannot be brought about by new laws or revised school policies, alone. A mass of legislation will undoubtedly emanate from the legislatures, as lawmakers try to mandate improvement. But, in the last analysis, each school must define excellence for itself. Student achievement should be increased, school operation should become more orderly and efficient, instructional apathy should be combated, shoddy standards must be replaced by respectable criteria, and the curricular elements which make for a good general education should be rethought.

Yet, the wishful thinking of the administration, notwithstanding, excellence does not come cheap. Good schools are the product of hard judgment, genuine commitment, and a willingness to pay the price. Excellence can be achieved--but only after educators, citizens and policy makers work cooperatively, set aside selfish interests, and value the goal enough to expend the required resources.

New standards are easy to create and hard to maintain. Precisely the same forces which eroded earlier standards are still at play. It will always, for example, be simpler--cheaper--to promote a non-achiever than to re-double effort. The ultimate key, one suspects, is better teachers and more dedicated teaching. Unless great care is taken, however, the new inservice programs to be inaugurated will be as impotent as those of the past.

Merit pay's trial by fire, as an illustration, will increase the importance of teacher evaluation. In turn, a more stringent evaluation program will have profound impact on staff development. We may well be headed toward a return of the "defect" approach, where professional growth consists primarily of correcting deficiencies identified in evaluations.

Although virtually all of the reports call for an improvement in teaching, there are few specifics. What are our greatest pedagogical infirmities? Do teachers need more general knowledge about their teaching subjects, a better repertory of skills, or a bag of tricks with which to motivate unenthusiastic learners? Again, the schools will need to decide for themselves. All teachers, clearly, do not have the same strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, from local district to local district, different emphasis will likely be placed upon the various goals of instruction.

It is good teaching, alone, that will stand between our confusing quantity with quality; equating "seat time" with learning time; and accepting "more" as "better". Worse, if due attention is not given to effective instruction, the addition of further requirements may produce more harm than good. When another year of mathematics is to be substituted for a course in "bachelor living," the re-deployed teacher must have an opportunity to retool. Correspondingly, the assignment of another hour or two of homework will not pose any particular problem; making sure that the assignments are significant, not trivial, and correcting student errors, are something else. It follows, therefore, that school and district inservice provision must be tied to the reforms which are put in place: the two must operate in tandem.

The nation's teachers are not nearly as inept as the reports appear to imply. The Risk report specifically cautions against making teachers the scapegoats; the cry for better teaching is unmistakable. An obvious villain, seemingly, is the teacher training institutions. They are, to be sure, a long way from perfect, and do not have a great deal over which to be proud. But the fact of the matter is that teachers learn to teach in the field and the best of the breed are invariably self-taught. It is the inservice training, therefore, not the preservice, which makes the greatest difference. There is, let it be said, no substitute for an adequate grounding in the liberal arts. In addition, teachers must have a sure grasp of the subject-matter they teach. Once these are assured, however, there are the skills of interaction, the ability to lead the child's mind beyond the obvious, and passion.

The major challenge faced by the new programs in staff development will be to dissipate the alienation and malaise that has engulfed the teaching profession, and to rekindle a sense of mission. It is for this reason that the potential reform movements must avoid further deterioration of teacher morale. In the absence of incentive and desire, capability is of little virtue. When, on the other hand, teachers' self-esteem has been restored, and society again values their contribution in tangible ways, a powerful will and resolve may also re-emerge. It is then that the best and brightest of our young will regard teaching as a worthwhile life endeavor; that those now in practice will overcome the deficiencies in their professional preparation, and that the nation will once more be able to take great pride in owning the world's best system of mass public education.

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